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Reflections on the use of Video Enhanced Reflective Practice to enhance a trainee educational psychologist’s attuned interactions in supervision

Abstract

This article reflects on my use of Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP), as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), to further develop my interactions, level of attunement and confidence to express my psychological opinion with my placement supervisor, within the context of supervision. The project consisted of three cycles of VERP using edited clips from video recordings of three supervision sessions, constituting ‘better than usual’ interactions which were reviewed with a VIG/VERP practitioner (the second author). My overall learning goal focused on further strengthening my confidence to express my psychological perspective in supervision, with specific targets identified relating to how I facilitated an equal partnership, shared alternative perspectives and co-constructed formulations. After three shared reviews, my baseline ratings for all helping questions increased and overall learning goals were met. With guidance from the VIG/VERP practitioner, I reflected how I became more present in supervision sessions, allowed myself thinking time without self-judgement, received, contributed and extended my views and hypotheses more confidently, and noticed and accepted praise more readily, which resulted in greater confidence and attunement both in further supervision sessions and other aspects of professional practice. This reflective account outlines the process and outcomes of the project before considering the strengths and limitations of using VERP to facilitate the professional development of TEPs, using the supervisory relationship as a vehicle for development.

Introduction

Supervision in the Educational Psychology profession
Supervision is defined as ‘...a psychological process that enables a focus on personal and professional development and that offers a confidential and reflective space for the EP to consider their work and their responses to it.’ (DECP, 2010, p. 7). It has long been recognised as a crucial component of the Educational Psychology profession, given the breadth of the role encompassing work at multiple levels, with diverse client groups, in a range of settings. Literature acknowledges how supervision is essential to safeguard the welfare of clients, enhance the development of professional practice (Scaife, 2006), and ensure adherence to professional standards relating to ethics, competency, knowledge and skills (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). Supervision has also been described as a ‘reciprocal learning process’ which benefits both supervisor and supervisee, due to the mutual exchange of knowledge and skills, sharing perspectives and the joint opportunity to reflect on practice (Carrington, 2004).

Hawkins and Shohet (2006) distinguish between the developmental, resourcing and qualitative functions of supervision, with the developmental aspect specifically focused on enhancing the supervisee’s skills, understanding and capacity through self-assessment and reflection.

Accreditation standards defined by the British Psychological Society identify that, throughout their training, trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) should receive a minimum of 30 minutes of supervision for each day of placement activity from a qualified educational psychologist (EP) (BPS, 2017, p.26). This enables reflection and review of current practice in order to become increasingly autonomous, self-organised and reflective practitioners, progressing from Level 1, the self-centred stage of development (‘Can I make it in this work?’), to reach Level II, client-centred (‘Can I help this client make it?’) and Level III, process-centred (‘How are we relating together?’) (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006, p.74). The supervision process mirrors Schön’s (1991) notion of reflection on action as opposed to reflection in action and enables deeper exploration of professional practice to facilitate
double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Additionally, the double-matrix model of supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006) illustrates the interconnecting processes between the client/supervisee and the supervisee/supervisor, and the greater insight gained into the TEP’s working relationships with their clients through reflection in supervision.

By the end of their training, TEPs must demonstrate that they meet a range of core and profession-specific competencies as outlined by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2015) regulatory body and the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017) including critical reflection and self-awareness, and their use of supervision to enhance these skills, as shown in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 here please: Supervision-based competencies that must be evidenced by TEPs to be awarded professional accreditation.

**Overview of Video Enhanced Reflective Practice and Video Interactive Guidance**

There is growing interest in the use of video-based tools to strengthen the work of a range of professionals, including EPs (Kennedy et al., 2015). Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) is one such method of professional development, where individuals review and reflect on video clips of their working practice, with the aim of further enhancing their attuned interactions with clients (Kennedy et al., 2015). **Attuned communication is defined as an individual receiving another’s initiative at both an emotional and cognitive level** (Begley 2013) in order to promote more positive and reciprocal interactions. VERP should be a collaborative, strengths-based approach, and should build on what the practitioner is doing well already.

VERP is a development of Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), an intervention which aims to promote stronger attunement, empathy and wellbeing between clients and people who are...
important to them (Kennedy et al., 2011), such as parents/carers and their children. In both VIG and VERP, clients are filmed in typical interactions and then engage in a shared review with a VIG/VERP practitioner to reflect on ‘better than usual’ moments, which are analysed using the AVIG UK (Association for Video Interaction Guidance UK) principles of attuned interaction and guidance for professional reflection on communication (Kennedy et al., 2015, pp. 22-23). The main difference between the two methods is that when using VIG with parents/carers, the VIG practitioner selects the video clips to review with their client, whereas in VERP the practitioner selects their own clips to share, thus facilitating active involvement in the planning of their professional development. However, the focus of both approaches is to reflect on and celebrate existing strengths in order to initiate the process of change. The use of baseline scaling and personal goal setting enables the client or practitioner to evaluate their progress over time, whilst exploring new meanings and solutions to their current communication patterns.

Both VIG and VERP are underpinned by the notion of intersubjectivity, which acknowledges the importance of emotional responsiveness within practitioner-client relationships for mediated learning to occur (Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991), where attuned initiatives and scaffolding from a more skilled individual (the VIG/VERP practitioner) enables the learner to progress. It is hoped that by providing a reflective space to discuss successful initiatives, an existing communication cycle, where initiatives might be missed, will be replaced with more attuned interactions, leading to a more positive and emotionally responsive relationship. Within the shared reviews, the VIG/VERP practitioner also adopts the attunement principles by receiving the client or practitioner’s initiatives, modelling attuned interactions and deepening discussions to trigger new narratives for future practice. In addition, the VIG/VERP practitioner is required to reflect on their work with VERP trainees with a VIG supervisor to assess and further develop their skills in attunement. Figure 1 illustrates the
concept of nested intersubjectivity, where learning, underpinned by attuned interactions, occurs for all participants within the VERP process.

INSERT FIGURE 1 here please: Model of Nested Intersubjectivity (Kennedy & Silhanova, 2014, as cited in Kennedy et al., 2015, p.27).

**Evidence base for VERP**

There is a small body of literature that illustrates how VERP has been used successfully to enhance the interactions between different practitioners and their clients, by reflecting on their day-to-day professional practice with a VIG/VERP practitioner. For example, Kennedy et al. (2015) outline how a VERP project, in which five clinical psychologists reviewed clips of themselves interacting within their team and in individual psychotherapeutic sessions, was perceived to result in stronger communication and group cohesion, as well as greater reflection on their strengths and working points for future casework.

Similarly, researchers have noted how VERP proved a valuable tool for enhancing the quality of interactions between Early Years Foundation Stage staff and children with speech, language and communication needs (Birbeck et al., 2015; Jarvis & Lyon, 2015), developing practitioners’ skills in supporting parental-infant relationships (Underdown, 2015), and increasing teachers’ mind-mindedness (Quinn, 2015). Additionally, studies have reported its benefits for gaining a greater understanding of pupils’ needs and abilities amongst teaching assistants (Hewitt et al., 2015), promoting emotional attunement at a whole-school level in mainstream (Hayes et al., 2015) and specialist (Lomas, 2016) provisions, and adapting practice to better develop young people’s resilience and emotional wellbeing (Cruikshank et al., 2018).
Further examples illustrate how VERP has enhanced family support workers’ communication with parents (Craddock & Branigan, 2017), as well as strengthened interactions between healthcare professionals and clients (Forster, 2015; Gibson et al., 2015). Finally, research by Currie (2008) concluded how EPs valued engaging in group VERP, to reflect on their positive interactions with pupils with severe and complex needs, highlighting the efficacy of peer-mediated learning opportunities on perceived professional competency. Further details of these studies, and those discussed later, are shown in Table 2, highlighting the perceived positive impact of VERP for both clients and practitioners.

INSERT TABLE 2 here please: Papers included in the current literature review.

Despite methodological limitations, such as a reliance on self-reflection and perceptions of change, the tendency to attribute change solely to VERP without considering other contributing factors, and limited follow-up data to monitor impact over time, such research illustrates the flexible nature of VERP and the positive impact it can have on supporting professional development across a range of disciplines and settings. However, further research is needed to add to the evidence base and to address issues of quality assurance.

Whilst initial anxieties about being filmed were present in many of the studies (Birbeck & Williams, 2013; Gibson et al., 2015; Jarvis & Lyon, 2015; Underdown, 2015), participants’ perceptions of the intervention were largely positive, with involvement resulting in greater attunement in their practice and improved cognitive and emotional outcomes for their clients, in line with previous findings (Gavine & Forsyth, 2011).

Use of VERP to support the professional development of students in higher education

Several studies have also outlined the applicability of VERP for supporting higher education students completing applied training programmes, which resonated with the first author’s stage of professional development. Stokes and Cummins (2013) reported the value of VERP
as a self-reflection tool, which enabled speech and language therapy students to enhance their communication and interaction skills on placement, whilst Greene et al. (2015) explored its uses with medical students to develop successful consultation skills and prepare them for direct observation examinations. Additionally, Sen et al. (2015) noted how a VERP course for newly qualified social workers, consultant social workers and social work lecturing staff resulted in increased self-confidence ratings as well as the group adapting the attunement principles to seek to reduce blame and promote a more equal partnership during difficult conversations with families. Such findings further highlight the benefits of practitioners using VERP within a reflective space to review their professional practice in greater depth.

More specifically, several papers have explored TEPs experiences of engaging in VERP during their training. For example, Pitt and Soni (2018) explored how VERP was used to improve a TEP’s collaboration with parents within consultation, which supported the TEP being comfortable with pauses and empowering parents to contribute to the action planning for their child. Murray and Leadbetter (2018) concluded how VERP had effectively enabled TEPs to develop their interactions in consultation and peer supervision due to its strengths-based nature and focus on ‘better than usual’ moments. Despite this, and in line with existing literature (Birbeck & Williams, 2013; Gibson et al., 2015; Jarvis & Lyon, 2015; Underdown, 2015), barriers included TEPs feeling apprehensive about being filmed and watching clips back, as well as potential threats to competency due to an initial tendency for TEPs to concentrate on less desirable behaviours (Begley, 2013; Sancho et al., 2015). In both studies, VERP was embedded in two EP doctoral training programmes, where TEPs selected clips of themselves where they considered they were displaying the principles of attunement and intersubjectivity with clients, to review with their university tutor in order to be “an active agent in the learning process” (Sancho et al., 2015, p.187) and to inform their professional development plan.
Additionally, several researchers (Begley, 2013; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Sancho et al., 2015) emphasised the importance of the TEP-VIG practitioner relationship, and how scaffolding, using the principles of attuned interactions and guidance (AVIG UK), by the practitioner within the shared reviews facilitated TEPs progression towards their individual goals. Furthermore, two papers (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Sancho et al., 2015) advocated for VERP to be incorporated into EP doctoral training courses due to its value in supporting ongoing reflection and professional development relating to client interactions.

Use of VERP to reflect on attunement in supervision

 Whilst there is a body of literature on the importance of the relationship in research supervision (Bills, 2004; Gurr, 2001; Malfoy & Webb, 2000), there is limited literature regarding the use of video more as a tool and VERP specifically to support interactions within supervision. Research by Findlay (2006) used a similar video-based method to VERP to encourage EPs to reflect upon their interactions in supervision. Feedback from EPs concluded that this was a powerful way of identifying and appreciating their strengths and informing ‘working points’ for future development in supervision, facilitated by attuned scaffolding from the practitioner.

Hawkins and Shohet (2006) also reported how they used video as a training method to develop supervision skills, albeit with supervisors rather than supervisees. Whilst this method did not strictly follow the process of VERP, when watching clips back, similar predetermined reflective questioning, based on Kagan’s Inter-personal process recall method (1980), were used to draw the supervisor’s attention to relational aspects which had proved effective in the session.

Scaife (2006) also highlights the importance of attunement within supervision, emphasising the centrality of a good supervisory alliance, which depends on the strength of the
relationship between supervisor and supervisee, and the extent to which they agree on goals and tasks (Bordin, 1983). This suggests how a positive rapport and attuned interactions are key within supervision and ultimately influence the effectiveness of the learning process, as summarised by Nolan (1999):

“The relationship between supervisor and supervisee can be more influential than the skills and techniques applied” (p.99).

The interpersonal and collaborative nature of supervision is further emphasised in the quote by Kennedy et al. (2018) below:

“The core task of supervision is to engage in a relational process that provides containing and security, thus facilitating professional growth through reflection on experience” (p.282).

Rationale for the current research

On reflecting on the link between the supervisory alliance and ongoing professional development, I became interested in how VERP could further enhance interactions with my placement supervisor, during my doctoral training. Whilst I had developed a positive working relationship with my supervisor already, I was mindful that my experiences in previous roles may have impacted negatively on my confidence and level of attunement in supervision as a TEP. This prior experience had caused a significant power imbalance and resulted in lowered confidence and competence as a practitioner, and a high reliance on my placement supervisor for advice and guidance.

However, following an introductory session on VERP at university, I reflected that this may present a powerful opportunity for professional development. From a developmental perspective of supervision, I identified that I was operating at Level 1, the self-centred stage
of development, but was motivated to reach Level II, client-centred, and Level III, process-centred (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006, p.74) by the end of the training. I felt that ‘helping questions’, the AVIG UK term for strengths-based goals developed by the client, focused on developing an equal partnership, sharing alternative perspectives and co-constructing formulations would help strengthen my interactions within supervision, increase my confidence and ensure that supervision was a collaborative process. I hoped that these stronger interpersonal skills could in turn then be applied to other aspects of the role, such as parent/carer and staff consultations.

Ethical Considerations

Fully informed consent (BPS, 2018) was gained from my placement supervisor to be involved in the VERP process and for subsequent write up and publication, although she chose not to be a co-author. She understood that this activity was to support my professional development, attunement in supervision and built on the prevailing strong supervisory relationship. The placement supervisor consented to three supervision sessions being filmed on a mobile phone, for me to re-watch and edit these after the sessions, and for selected clips to be shared with the VIG/VERP practitioner (my university supervisor and the second author) in the three shared reviews. The placement supervisor was asked if she wanted to engage in joint reflection of the clips, or wanted a copy for her own personal reflection, however she declined. Her identity has therefore been anonymised and the VIG/VERP practitioner is listed as the second author, who also gave her fully informed consent to be involved in the project.

Method
After discussing the purpose and goals of the work with my placement supervisor, and gaining her consent to participate in VERP, I identified a desired overall outcome relating to my engagement and communication in supervision:

- To improve interactions with my placement supervisor in supervision by becoming more confident to contribute and express my psychological perspective in problem-solving discussions, so that the partnership is more equal and collaborative.

Consequently, the following helping question (learning goal) was developed as a focus for the first video-recording, alongside completing a baseline rating (5/10) and description (‘I feel I rely on guidance and look to my supervisor for initial hypotheses, formulations and next steps’) and identifying my ‘ideal’ rating (10/10), in order to monitor progress over time:

1) What do I do to facilitate an equal partnership in supervision?

An hour-long supervision session was filmed using a mobile phone, which was positioned to ensure that both practitioners could be seen on the screen. During this session, I reflected on a particular case, involving future planning for a young person at a pupil referral unit, and was keen to seek advice from my supervisor about appropriate next steps and practical advice for staff. After the session, I re-watched the recording and then selected a two-minute clip to share with the VIG/VERP practitioner which I felt demonstrated an equal partnership and positive attunement between myself and my supervisor, in line with the principles of attuned interaction and guidance (Kennedy et al., 2015, pp. 22-23). I identified that the clip I selected included some key observable behaviours that I could build on such as pausing from note-taking to give eye contact, listening actively to my supervisor’s contributions, waiting attentively before I responded and showing I had heard by nodding and repeating my supervisor’s words and comments. During the first shared review, the VIG/VERP practitioner enabled reflection using the AVIG UK principles regarding which of my
behaviours I felt had facilitated a reciprocal interaction, prompting consideration of my thoughts and feelings both at the time and in the present. By concentrating on several ‘micro-moments’ which highlighted intersubjectivity, this enabled me to identify progress from my baseline rating and recognise more positive aspects of the communicative exchange such as returning eye contact and smiles, showing emotional warmth through body language and intonation, receiving and then responding, and checking shared understanding by repeating and summarising discussions.

Figure 2 illustrates the process of this project which spanned a five-month period, and Appendix 1 shows the evaluation form used to monitor the ongoing professional development.

A further two hour-long supervision sessions were then recorded and edited using the same process, followed by two further shared reviews between myself and the VIG/VERP practitioner, which totalled three complete cycles of VERP. The focus of these clips were discussions about how to support an early years child displaying an ambivalent attachment style and reflecting on the effectiveness of a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy intervention for a secondary-age pupil experiencing high levels of anxiety and emotionally-based school avoidance. At the second shared review an additional helping question was introduced:

2) What do I do to enable sharing an alternative perspective respectfully and sensitively to co-construct formulations in supervision and consultation?

Again, using the principles of attuned interaction and guidance (AVIG UK), the VIG/VERP practitioner gave me space to reflect on what was going well and enabled exploration of new narratives about interactions in supervision. At each shared review, myself and the
VIG/VERP practitioner revisited my previous ratings, and discussed how learning and developing a deeper understanding of attunement could be applied to future scenarios.

Discussion and Reflections

Following the first video-recording, both myself and my placement supervisor reflected on how uncomfortable and unnatural the session had felt in comparison to usual supervision sessions, which we attributed to the presence of the camera, however we found filming was less daunting during the second and third cycles. When reviewing the first two-minute clip for the first time, I recognised that I became very self-critical and focused on behaviours I perceived as undesirable such as ‘umm’ utterances, long pauses, avoidance of eye contact when receiving praise and a reliance on note-taking, which made it difficult for me to identify any strengths. These negative thoughts reflect previous literature findings (Begley, 2013; Birbeck & Williams, 2013; Gibson et al., 2015; Jarvis & Lyon, 2015; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Sancho et al., 2015; Underdown, 2015) regarding threats to competency and sense of self; however these anxieties were contained by the VIG/VERP practitioner who helped reframe these as working points and increased my curiosity about how VERP could support self-development. As noted by other researchers (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Pitt & Soni, 2018; Sancho et al., 2015), my relationship with the VIG/VERP practitioner proved to be an important factor in the success of the process, as she created a safe space where it was comfortable to reflect on practice by naming positively what she could see, reframing any doubts I had about my competency, asking supportive questions such as ‘what do you notice yourself doing?’, ‘how was that received by your supervisor?’ and ‘I wonder what you were thinking/feeling?’, as well as smiling, leaning towards and allowing me to have thinking time.
During the first shared review ‘better than usual’ moments were identified where the partnership between myself and my supervisor was felt to be equal, noticing my active contribution to the dialogue, taking turns to share personal viewpoints about the case and further building on suggestions made by my supervisor. The VIG/VERP practitioner also highlighted how, in line with the principles of attuned interaction and guidance (Kennedy et al., 2015, pp. 22-23), I demonstrated active listening (encouraging initiatives), returned eye contact and friendly body language, and responded to my supervisor’s ideas, as well as accepting praise such as ‘lovely’ and ‘fantastic’ (receiving initiatives). She helped me to identify particular moments where I had been fully ‘present’ in the interaction such as taking time to pause and reflect, which had allowed me to consider further solutions regarding the case ‘in the moment’ as opposed to relying on pre-determined ideas. This mirrors Pitt and Soni’s (2018) findings and emphasises the value of the VIG/VERP practitioner in offering additional reflections regarding my strengths which I had not considered myself.

Re-watching the clips and discussing these successful instances in detail helped me to recognise the influence of relational behaviours on the quality of the interaction with the supervisor. For example, I identified how I used notetaking as a way of minimising praise, however recognised in the ‘better than usual’ moments when I was not writing, I was more present. This enabled reception of my supervisor’s positive comments and encouraging body language (smiling, nodding), and resulted in a more attuned interaction. Additionally, the VIG/VERP practitioner supported reframing of what pauses may mean, from doubts about competency to acceptable ‘thinking time’. This was achieved through jointly identifying that my supervisor respected these pauses by waiting, displaying warm and encouraging body language (smiling, eye contact) and listening and responding actively when I contributed further. The VIG/VERP practitioner further pointed out that my supervisor had also paused on several occasions during our conversation and asked what I was thinking during these
brief moments of silence. I reflected positively that I had honoured these moments by giving
her space and waiting attentively, which appeared to facilitate rather than hinder the
interaction. This proved a valuable learning point for my next supervision session, as I was
less self-critical for taking ‘thinking time’ and noticed that this was mutually required in
order to deepen discussions. The practitioner’s use of supportive questions such as ‘how do
you feel watching the clip back?’ and ‘is this how you would like to be?’ reiterated the
strengths-based nature of VERP and helped me to identify how I could apply my learning to
other aspects of my role such as direct work with pupils and staff or parent/carer
consultations. After this review, I increased the baseline rating for my first helping question
from 5/10 to 7/10 due to positive feelings about how a more equal partnership had been
facilitated in supervision.

When reviewing the second clip of supervision during the next shared review, reflection
focused on how the supervisor giving space to think and me allowing myself this time,
enabled me to feel more confident about presenting my initial formulation, reducing
dependence on the supervisor for guidance. The VIG/VERP practitioner also highlighted
how I remained fully engaged when the supervisor checked she had understood before
offering her own hypothesis, by returning her eye contact and listening attentively to her
contributions, rather than making notes which had previously disrupted the interaction. This
led to observations that a maintained presence enabled an expansion of ideas and further
justification for the formulation, which was well received by the supervisor and demonstrated
attuned intersubjectivity based on the principles of attuned interaction and guidance
(Kennedy et al., 2015, pp. 22-23). Again, questions from the practitioner such as ‘what did
you notice yourself doing?’ ‘how were you feeling in the moment’ and ‘what do you think
your supervisor was thinking at the time?’ gave me space to further reflect on positive aspects
of my communication such as taking thinking time, sharing my ideas more confidently and
discussing a new reciprocal understanding, which enabled a more collaborative interaction
which had natural flow.

Following the second review, my baseline ratings on the first helping question increased
further from 7/10 to 8.5/10 due to a reduced reliance on notetaking and more mindfulness of
how full participation promoted an equal interaction. In addition, there was reflection on how
this insight could be transferred into consultation meetings, by choosing to make brief bullet
points rather than detailed notes, and clearly clarifying whether consultees were happy with
this, to ensure attunement and remaining ‘in the moment’ with parents/carers and staff during
discussions, showing how VERP facilitates double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978).
Double-loop learning refers to second-order, deeper learning and within VERP this was
through naming which of my behaviours enabled power to be shared.

At this stage, a second helping question was introduced to further develop skills in offering
alternative perspectives and co-constructing knowledge respectfully and sensitively in both
supervision and consultation. New baseline ratings (4/10 in consultation and 6/10 in
supervision), descriptions (‘I feel I currently lack confidence in offering differing
perspectives in consultation’ and ‘I feel slightly more confident to offer alternative
perspectives in supervision but would still like to improve’) and an ‘ideal’ rating (10/10) was
completed and, during the third recording, the focus moved to the attunement principles
relating to ‘guiding’ and ‘deepening discussions’ which support mediated learning (Kennedy
et al., 2015, pp. 22-23).

During the final shared review, the VIG/VERP practitioner again supported reflection on the
‘better than usual’ interactions relating to my two helping questions. After three cycles, good
progress was recorded regarding the first helping question (from 5/10 to 9.5/10) and I
reflected how receiving, extending and building on my supervisor’s responses in a friendly,
collaborative and respectful manner had strengthened the relationship and facilitated a more equal working partnership. I also recognised that my ability to more readily accept praise and positive comments from both my supervisor and the VIG/VERP practitioner had improved, which was considerable progress from previously distracting and averting when any praise was given. Additionally, I felt more confident about hypothesising and thinking ‘in the moment’ as oppose to relying on pre-planned ideas, as well as sharing my formulation before asking for guidance from my supervision. Furthermore, I noted that I had gained a greater understanding of the relational behaviours which had helped in another recent supervision, with an improved confidence to offer my perspectives and extend on the supervisor’s reflections about one of her own cases, which guided her to an alternative solution about what might be the communicative functions of a particular behaviour, and resulted in an effective mediated learning opportunity. This supported Carrington’s (2004) idea that supervision is a ‘reciprocal learning process’ which benefits both participants due to the mutual exchange of knowledge and skills and joint opportunity to reflect on practice.

Regarding the second helping question, the short clip selected captured a deeper discussion between myself and my supervisor, to review further with the VIG/VERP practitioner. Together we identified how I had named a difference of opinion and contradiction, confidently yet respectfully, by first acknowledging my supervisor’s viewpoint and then offering an alternative opinion to reflect values about the importance of pupil voice and the client’s involvement in decision-making. This was met by my supervisor repeating the explanation and nodding and smiling which showed she had understood and valued my point. The VIG/VERP practitioner supported me to identify that by remaining fully present, my supervisor agreed with me, and I then consequently received her praise, which enabled a new, shared, and co-constructed understanding of the point being discussed. This shared review was particularly valuable as the VIG/VERP practitioner highlighted other aspects of the
interaction which promoted strong intersubjectivity. This included the use of humour and emotional warmth through intonation, which had not been previously considered, and consequently my rating on the second helping question was moved from 6/10 to 7.5/10.

Additionally, I reflected how, during all shared reviews, the VIG/VERP practitioner had also closely adhered to the AVIG UK principles of attuned interactions, such as positively receiving my initiatives using friendly body language such as eye contact, smiling and nodding, repeating and summarising my comments to show she had understood, using praise and emotional warmth, and judging the amount of support I needed to identify strengths, which made me feel at ease and more relaxed about reflecting openly and honestly.

**Conclusion and Implications for EPs**

This article has provided a novel insight into how VERP was used to enhance the interactions between a TEP and her supervisor within placement supervision, albeit based solely on my personal experience and perspective of the process. Future research would benefit from including the experiences, feelings and views of the supervisor, which could have been achieved if myself and the placement supervisor reviewed the clips together, as well as from the perspective of the VIG/VERP practitioner. Whilst previous research identifies the benefits of VERP for developing EPs’ supervision skills (Findlay, 2006) and TEPs’ peer supervision skills (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018), no study has yet considered its applicability for TEPs’ development within placement supervision. VERP provided a unique tool to enable me to reflect more deeply on my level of attunement and the processes of interaction with my supervisor, thereby enabling greater depth of discussion and learning. Additionally, as a key component of the EP role involves being well-attuned to clients’ needs (Sancho et al., 2015), VERP facilitated deeper reflection on attunement and what promotes reciprocal interaction in other aspects of my work such as consultation. Without the use of video, reflection would have been solely based on retrospective memory, i.e. reflection ‘on action’
as opposed to reflection ‘in action’, and would not have enabled micro-analysis of behaviours which facilitated a deeper level of reflection and personal development.

In summary, after completing three cycles of VERP, where three supervision sessions were video-recorded and edited to reflect on in shared reviews with the VIG/VERP practitioner, I felt I had achieved my overall learning goal regarding improved collaboration with my supervisor and increased confidence in expressing my own psychological perspective during problem-solving discussions. I was pleased with my progress and realised how being more attuned to the supervisor had facilitated a more equal working partnership and enabled sharing alternative perspectives respectfully and sensitively. My key learning points related to the importance of remaining fully present in discussions with my supervisor, such as receiving her praise, accepting ‘thinking time’ without self-judgment, being less reliant on note-taking and acknowledging another viewpoint before offering a differing hypothesis. Whilst I acknowledge that these developments could also reflect a progression towards professional maturity due to my stage of training, I did not think such detailed insight would have been gained without the use of VERP.

Whilst initial apprehensions connected with previous literature regarding threats to competency and sense of self, these were largely outweighed by the benefits of the project. I valued the collaborative, strengths-based approach of VERP, and attributed my progress to the supportive scaffolding and mediated learning from the VIG/VERP practitioner, as well as a personal commitment to enhancing self-development. VERP aided progression from Level I (self-centred) of the developmental model of supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006) to Levels II (client-centred) and III (process-centred), which in turn has facilitated improved outcomes for clients. For example, by developing greater relational agency (Edwards, 2010), my learning about successful attunement such as honouring my own and others’ pauses and reframing these as thinking time, actively listening to others and warmly receiving and
building on what has been shared has been applied to consultations to ensure attentive engagement with parents/carers and staff. This has led to an increase in positive feedback from staff and parents/carers such as ‘Emily was very helpful and an excellent listener’, ‘she understood and listened to my views’ and ‘gentle, understanding and considerate, and allowed plenty of time for discussions’ which I attribute to this reflective professional development process.

This reflective account has a number of limitations in that it is based on one person’s subjective experience of reflecting on video of supervision using the principles of attuned interaction and guidance (AVIG UK), and does not include the placement supervisor’s or VIG/VERP practitioner’s views. Further research on the use of VERP with TEPs could compare the use of video-based approaches with those without video to develop skills in greater depth, and could examine the elements of VERP that are the most important to support skill development.

To conclude, and in support of previous research (Murray and Leadbetter, 2018; Sancho et al., 2015), I found VERP to be a flexible and effective professional developmental tool for TEPs, either on an individual or group basis, and should be promoted within EP training courses to encourage reflection on relational aspects of the role, such as supervision and direct work with clients. However, attention should be given to providing a clear rationale for the benefits of VERP, managing potential anxieties, ensuring TEPs have the time and space to engage in the work, ensuring video-editing and goal-setting are client-centred, focusing on strengths, and harnessing a strong relationship with the VIG/VERP practitioner to maximise its success. Whilst this article has focused specifically on TEPs, it has wider relevance to other students completing applied training courses, in addition to qualified professionals, due to the principle that attunement and “interpersonal communication is at the core of what most professionals do on a daily basis” (Strathie et al., 2011, p.170).
References


### Appendix 1 - Evaluation form used to monitor progress towards ‘helping questions’ during the VERP project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key</strong></th>
<th>Rating prior to VERP project</th>
<th>Rating following Shared Review 1</th>
<th>Rating following Shared Review 2</th>
<th>Rating following Shared Review 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>My helping question (16.02.18) is...</strong></th>
<th><strong>What do I do to facilitate an equal partnership in supervision?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This is where I think I am now...</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline description</strong></td>
<td>I feel I rely on guidance and look to my supervisor for initial hypotheses, formulations and next steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>This is where I would like to be ...</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description after 1 cycle (16.02.18)</strong></td>
<td>I felt this section was more equal as we shared recommendations, with both of us contributing to the dialogue and sharing viewpoints. This was aided by me allowing myself thinking time (waiting attentively), and to pause without self-judgement, noticing and accepting praise (receiving my supervisor’s initiatives) such as ‘lovely’ and ‘fantastic’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description after 2 cycles (11.05.18)</strong></td>
<td>I felt more confident and accepting of pauses, and have noticed I am less reliant on note taking as a way of minimising praise. I feel I am more able to be in the moment and participate fully in interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description after 3 cycles (15.06.18)</strong></td>
<td>I felt there were more positive attuned interactions in this clip where we received, extended and built on each other’s responses in a friendly, collaborative and respectful manner. The atmosphere felt relaxed and I noticed we leant in towards each other, maintained eye contact and smiled as encouragement. I felt I accepted and coped well with praise from my supervisor and was glad I remained fully engaged in the interaction rather than making notes as this meant I didn’t miss anything (I now make notes after supervision). I feel much more confident sharing my formulation and thoughts about a case before asking for guidance. This equal partnership was also apparent in another recent supervision where I felt confident to offer my ideas about a case my supervisor was involved with which was well received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My helping question (11.05.18) is…</td>
<td>What do I do to enable sharing an alternative perspective respectfully and sensitively to co-construct formulations in supervision and consultation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| This is where I think I am now ... | ![C S Green]  
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Baseline description | C - I feel I currently lack confidence in offering differing perspectives in consultation. S – I feel slightly more confident to offer alternative perspectives in supervision but would still like to improve. |
| This is where I would like to be ... | ![Green]  
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Description after 1 cycle (15.06.18) | This clip captured a deeper discussion involving respectful naming difference of opinion and contradictions. I listened to and acknowledged my supervisor’s viewpoint and then offered an alternative opinion to reflect my values about pupil voice and involvement in decision making. This was then accepted and praised by my supervisor, enabling us to reach a new shared understanding. |
| Description after 2 cycles |   |
| Description after 3 cycles |   |